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# Flora and Fauna Assessment 174 Muntz Road, Ashbourne

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Prepared for Ashbourne Landcare Group



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**March 2022**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Background

In 2021, the Ashbourne Landcare Group commissioned the author to conduct flora and fauna assessments across twelve private properties occurring within the Ashbourne district. The project was funded by a grant provided by the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA).

The surveys confirmed that the private lands across the Ashbourne district are of very high conservation significance. The following ecological values were recorded across the 12 properties:

- 306 separate plant species, 220 which are indigenous and 86 introduced,
- 59 separate bird species,
- eight plant species listed as *Endangered* or *Critically Endangered* under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee List,
- numerous plant species of regional significance,
- 43 of the plant species observed have not previously been (officially) recorded in the area according to a 10km radius search of the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA). Twenty-five of these are indigenous and 18 are introduced.

This report presents the results of the flora and fauna assessment at 174 Muntz Road, Ashbourne. It provides a list of the flora and fauna species that were recorded, a description of vegetation and habitat values and some recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of ecological values.

### 1.2 Study area

The study area is part of a property located at 174 Muntz Road, however the bushland area assessed is adjacent to and accessed via Einsporns Road. This area of the property is 28 hectares in size. The eastern portion supports bushland while the paddocks to the west are mostly treeless and contain three separate dams. A house and associated gardens is located in the northern section of the bushland area.

### **1.3 Methods**

The property was assessed for approximately three hours on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2021. Due to the large size of the property and time constraints, the survey was confined to the bushland area in the east and around the dams in the central section. These areas were traversed on foot and a list was compiled of all flora and fauna species observed. For fauna, most species were recorded from identification of calls (e.g. birds, frogs) or scats and tracks (e.g. Black Wallaby). Notes were taken on the vegetation, habitat features and management issues, whilst photographs were taken of representative areas.

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## 2.0 RESULTS

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### 2.1 Flora species

During the November 2021 survey, a total of 118 flora species were recorded at 174 Muntz Road (see Appendix 1). Of these, 90 are indigenous species and 28 are introduced or non-indigenous native species (e.g. Cootamundra Wattle from southern NSW). Two of the species recorded are listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and two are considered to be of regional significance (see Table 1 and Figure 1), including:

- Several mature Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*) trees in the south-western section of the bushland area. Yarra Gum is listed as threatened under the FFG Act. The Ashbourne area supports many populations of this species.
- Two plants of Floodplain Fireweed (*Senecio campylocarpus*) on the northern fringe of the southern dam. This species is listed as threatened under the FFG Act but is not uncommon in wetland and riparian habitats across the region.
- The regionally significant Musky Caladenia (*Caladenia moschata*) and Slaty Helmet-orchid (*Corybas incurvus*) in the bushland area. Neither of these two species have previously been recorded in the Ashbourne area.

**Table 1 Locally significant flora species recorded at 174 Muntz Road, November 2021**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
<i>Caladenia moschata</i>	Musky Caladenia	Regional
<i>Corybas incurvus</i>	Slaty Helmet-orchid	Regional
<i>Eucalyptus yarraensis</i>	Yarra Gum	Critically Endangered
<i>Senecio campylocarpus</i>	Floodplain Fireweed	Endangered



## 2.2 Vegetation description

The bushland area at 174 Muntz Road is dominated by Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*) and Candelbark (*Eucalyptus rubida*) with occasional Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) and Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*).

The understorey contains a middle tree layer of Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) and a ground-layer supporting a rich diversity of small shrubs, grasses, lilies and herbs. These include Silky Daisy-bush (*Olearia myrsinoides*), Trailing Podolobium (*Podolobium procumbens*), Grey Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia cinerascens*), Red-anther Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma pallidum*), Yam Daisy (*Microseris walteri*), Common Everlasting (*Coronidium scorpioides*), Blue Pincushion (*Brunonia australis*), Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*), Pale Vanilla-lily (*Arthropodium milleflorum*) and Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*).

The treeless paddocks to the west and north are largely dominated by introduced pasture species, however the dams contain a mix of planted trees and shrubs and remnant wetland sedges and rushes such as Common Spike-sedge (*Eleocharis acuta*) and Hollow Rush (*Juncus amabilis*).



Plate 1 Significant flora species recorded at 174 Muntz Road, November 2021





**Plate 2** Bushland in the southern area of the property supports a range of shrubs, grasses, orchids and lillies

### 2.3 High threat weeds

Of the weeds recorded within the property, nine are considered to be high threat species that are recommended for control. These species are listed in Table 2 below. All are scattered at low density throughout the property, although a concentration of introduced wattles occurs near the southern boundary of the bushland area adjacent to Einsporns Road.

**Table 2** High threat weeds recorded at 174 Muntz Rd, November 2021

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acacia baileyana</i>	Cootamundra Wattle
<i>Acacia floribunda</i>	White Sallow-wattle
<i>Acacia howittii</i>	Sticky Wattle
<i>Acacia prominens</i>	Gosford Wattle
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	English Broom
<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Sweet Briar
<i>Rubus anglocandicans</i>	Common Blackberry
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse

## 2.4 Fauna

During the November 2021 survey, a total of 21 fauna species were recorded, including 17 bird, two frog and two mammal species (see Appendix 2). The property would support a much greater diversity of fauna species, however due to the high mobility and cryptic nature of many species, it would take a survey across multiple years and seasons to prepare a detailed list.

Habitat features observed within the property included:

- Several large trees with hollows. These trees are essential for many local birds and mammals which rely on hollows for breeding.
- Scattered small to large logs. These are important for fauna that live or feed at ground level to provide cover from predators. Large-old logs often have hollows that may be utilised for shelter and nesting.
- Healthy litter layer, including sticks, leaves, bark and humus. A healthy litter layer is essential for many insects.
- Diverse plant community, providing food and habitat for various mammals, birds, insects and other fauna. Plant communities with many different species are better quality habitat than low diverse communities due to the variation in different flowers that attract specific insects. They are also more structurally diverse and provide better cover and shelter.
- The dams on the property provide habitat for frog species which rely on water for breeding, as well as a small diversity of water-bugs. They also serve as a source of drinking water for birds and mammals.

The bushland within the property is also connected to other extensive areas of bushland and is therefore an important part of a network of corridors that allow fauna to move across the landscape.

## 2.5 Management issues and recommendations

Maintaining and enhancing the ecological values of the property will require protection of the bushland and occasional management. The following actions should be considered by the landowners:

- Control of high threat weeds shown in Table 2. Smaller plants can be removed by hand, however larger plants may need to be cut at ground level and painted with herbicide. If the



landowners wish to avoid using herbicide, plants can be regularly cut at ground level. They will continue to re-shoot but at least will be kept at a low height and will not spread further seed.

- Retention of as many logs across the bushland area as possible, particularly the larger ones.
- Additional areas for hollow dependant fauna could be provided by installing nest-boxes.
- Avoid excessive disturbance in the bushland areas, particularly where there are dense areas of wildflowers.
- Depending on the landowner's personal vision for the property, it would be of great value to plant additional habitat corridors in the treeless paddocks in the western and northern section of the property. A planted north-south corridor along the western boundary would serve as an important habitat link, allowing birds and other fauna to move across the landscape. Such a corridor should be planted with indigenous trees and shrubs such as Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*), Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*), Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) and Tree Banksia (*Banksia marginata*).

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### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

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A total of 118 flora species and 21 fauna species were recorded during the brief assessment, including several locally significance plant species. The property also supports important habitat and is part of a network of corridors that allow fauna species to disperse across the landscape.

Maintaining and enhancing the ecological values of the property will require protecting the bushland from excessive disturbance and control of high threat weeds.

## Appendix 1 - Flora species recorded at 174 Muntz Road, November 2021

Key to symbols	
*	Introduced species
#	Non-indigenous native species

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
#	<i>Acacia baileyana</i>	Cootamundra Wattle	
	<i>Acacia dealbata subsp. dealbata</i>	Silver Wattle	
#	<i>Acacia floribunda</i>	White Sallow-wattle	
	<i>Acacia howittii</i>	Sticky Wattle	
	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	
#	<i>Acacia prominens</i>	Gosford Wattle	
	<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	Bidgee-widgee	
*	<i>Acetosella vulgaris</i>	Sheep Sorrel	
	<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>	Honey-pots	
*	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Brown-top Bent	
*	<i>Aira elegantissima</i>	Delicate Hair-grass	
	<i>Anthosachne scabra s.s.</i>	Common Wheat-grass	
*	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	
*	<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsely-piert	
	<i>Arthropodium milleflorum s.s.</i>	Pale Vanilla-lily	
	<i>Arthropodium strictum s.s.</i>	Chocolate Lily	
	<i>Asperula scoparia subsp. scoparia</i>	Prickly Woodruff	
*	<i>Briza minor</i>	Lesser Quaking-grass	
	<i>Brunonia australis</i>	Blue Pincushion	
	<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Milkmaids	
	<i>Caladenia moschata</i>	Musky Caladenia	
	<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tall Sedge	
#	<i>Carex inversa</i>	Knob Sedge	
	<i>Cassinia aculeata subsp. aculeata</i>	Common Cassinia	
*	<i>Centaurium erythraea</i>	Common Centaury	
	<i>Centipeda elatinoides</i>	Elatine Sneezeweed	
*	<i>Cerastium glomeratum s.l.</i>	Common Mouse-ear Chickweed	
	<i>Chiloglottis valida</i>	Common Bird-orchid	
*	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	
	<i>Coronidium scorpioides s.s.</i>	Button Everlasting	
	<i>Corybas incurvus</i>	Slaty Helmet-orchid	
	<i>Crassula decumbens var. decumbens</i>	Spreading Crassula	
*	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	
*	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	English Broom	

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
	<i>Daucus glochidiatus</i>	Native Carrot	
	<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea	
	<i>Dianella admixta</i>	Black-anther Flax-lily	
	<i>Dillwynia cinerascens s.s.</i>	Grey Parrot-pea	
	<i>Drosera auriculata</i>	Tall Sundew	
	<i>Drosera peltata s.l.</i>	Pale Sundew	
	<i>Eleocharis acuta</i>	Common Spike-sedge	
	<i>Epacris impressa</i>	Common Heath	
	<i>Epilobium billardioreanum</i>	Variable Willow-herb	
	<i>Eragrostis brownii</i>	Common Love-grass	
	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate Stringybark	
	<i>Eucalyptus radiata subsp. radiata</i>	Narrow-leaf Peppermint	
	<i>Eucalyptus rubida</i>	Candlebark	
	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis subsp. viminalis</i>	Manna Gum	
	<i>Eucalyptus yarraensis</i>	Yarra Gum	Critically Endangered
	<i>Euchiton japonicus s.s.</i>	Creeping Cudweed	
*	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	
	<i>Geranium sp. 2</i>	Variable Crane's-bill	
	<i>Glyceria australis</i>	Australian Sweet-grass	
	<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>	Common Raspwort	
	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple Coral-pea	
	<i>Hemarthria uncinata var. uncinata</i>	Mat Grass	
*	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog	
	<i>Hovea heterophylla</i>	Common Hovea	
	<i>Hydrocotyle foveolata</i>	Yellow Pennywort	
	<i>Hydrocotyle hirta</i>	Hairy Pennywort	
	<i>Hydrocotyle sibthorpioides</i>	Shining Pennywort	
	<i>Hypericum gramineum</i>	Small St John's Wort	
	<i>Hypericum japonicum</i>	Matted St John's Wort	
*	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Flatweed	
	<i>Isolepis fluitans</i>	Floating Club-sedge	
*	<i>Isolepis levynsiana</i>	Tiny Flat-sedge	
	<i>Isolepis marginata</i>	Little Club-sedge	
	<i>Isolepis platycarpa</i>	Broad-fruit Club-sedge	
	<i>Isotoma fluviatilis subsp. australis</i>	Swamp Isotome	
	<i>Juncus amabilis</i>	Hollow Rush	
*	<i>Juncus articulatus subsp. articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush	
#	<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	Toad Rush	
	<i>Juncus pallidus</i>	Pale Rush	
	<i>Juncus subsecundus</i>	Finger Rush	
	<i>Lagenophora stipitata s.l.</i>	Common Bottle-daisy	



Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
*	<i>Leontodon saxatilis</i> subsp. <i>saxatilis</i>	Hairy Hawkbit	
*	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	
	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i> subsp. <i>filiformis</i>	Wattle Mat-rush	
	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i> subsp. <i>exilis</i>	Cluster-headed Mat-rush	
	<i>Luzula meridionalis</i> var. <i>flaccida</i>	Common Woodrush	
	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i> var. <i>stipoides</i>	Weeping Grass	
	<i>Microseris walteri</i>	Yam Daisy	
	<i>Olearia myrsinoides</i>	Silky Daisy-bush	
	<i>Opercularia varia</i>	Variable Stinkweed	
	<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Grassland Wood-sorrel	
*	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort	
	<i>Plantago varia</i>	Variable Plantain	
	<i>Poa sieberiana</i> var. <i>sieberiana</i>	Grey Tussock-grass	
	<i>Poa sieberiana</i> var. <i>hirtella</i>	Grey Tussock-grass	
	<i>Podolobium procumbens</i>	Trailing Podolobium	
	<i>Poranthera microphylla</i> s.s.	Small Poranthera	
	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i> subsp. <i>esculentum</i>	Austral Bracken	
	<i>Ranunculus glabrifolius</i>	Shining Buttercup	
	<i>Ranunculus lappaceus</i>	Australian Buttercup	
*	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Sweet Briar	
*	<i>Rubus anglocandicans</i>	Common Blackberry	
	<i>Rytidosperma geniculatum</i>	Kneed Wallaby-grass	
	<i>Rytidosperma pallidum</i>	Silvertop Wallaby-grass	
	<i>Rytidosperma</i> spp.	Wallaby Grass	
	<i>Schoenus apogon</i>	Common Bog-sedge	
	<i>Senecio campylocarpus</i>	Floodplain Fireweed	Endangered
	<i>Senecio glomeratus</i>	Annual Fireweed	
	<i>Senecio phelleus</i>	Stony Fireweed	
	<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i>	Cotton Fireweed	
	<i>Solenogyne gunnii</i>	Hairy Solenogyne	
	<i>Stellaria pungens</i>	Prickly Starwort	
	<i>Tetradthea ciliata</i>	Pink-bells	
	<i>Thelymitra pauciflora</i> s.l.	Slender Sun-orchid	
	<i>Thelymitra</i> spp.	Sun Orchid	
	<i>Tricoryne elatior</i>	Yellow Rush-lily	
*	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Suckling Clover	
*	<i>Trifolium subterraneum</i>	Subterranean Clover	
*	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	
	<i>Veronica calycina</i>	Hairy Speedwell	
	<i>Veronica gracilis</i>	Slender Speedwell	
	<i>Viola hederacea</i> sensu Entwisle (1996)	Ivy-leaf Violet	
*	<i>Vulpia bromoides</i>	Squirrel-tail Fescue	

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta subsp. stricta</i>	Tall Bluebell	

## Appendix 2 - - Fauna species recorded at 174 Muntz Road, November 2021

Key to symbols	
*	Introduced species
	Recorded previously by the landowner

Status	Common name	Scientific Name	Type	FFG Status
	Australian Magpie	<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Bird	
	Banjo Frog	<i>Limnodynastes dumerilii</i>	Frog	
	Bare-nosed Wombat	<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>	Mammal	
	Brown Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Bird	
	Common Froglet	<i>Crinia signifera</i>	Frog	
	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	Bird	
	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Mammal	
*	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Bird	
	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	Bird	
	Grey Currawong	<i>Strepera versicolor</i>	Bird	
	Grey Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>	Bird	
	Grey Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Bird	
	Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Bird	
	Long-billed Corella	<i>Cacatua tenuirostris</i>	Bird	
	Rufous Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Bird	
	Striated Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	Bird	
	Stubble Quail	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>	Bird	
	Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Bird	
	Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Bird	
	White-necked Heron	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>	Bird	
	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	Bird	